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AUTHOR Gough, J. E.
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ABSTRACT

The rationale for and development of off-campus studies at Deakin University, Australia, are described. Based on the determination that Victoria had substantial demand for off-campus studies, Deakin University planned to admit to its off-campus program approximately 1,000 students in 1978 and anticipated 2,500 to 3,000 off-campus students by the mid-1980s. Admission would be based on the normal university requirements, but would also be granted to adult students who demonstrate the capacity and motivation for university studies. A counseling program would consist of three aspects: (1) allow new students to complete admission and enrollment procedures between June and December of the year before they start courses; (2) send students a counseling package with information on potential problems, available resources, study techniques, and a self-assessment protocol to evaluate college-going reasons; and (3) a weekend workshop to explore issues in more depth. In 1978 off-campus course offerings will be offered in education, the humanities, and social sciences. Information is presented on course developent, the schools's organizational structure, a regional network of study centers, and cooperative arrangements with other institutions. (SW)

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DEVELOPING AN OFF CAMPUS STUDIES PROGRAM AT DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

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J.E. GOUGH
DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

August 1977

Institutional Backdrop

Deakin University became a fully functioning University with a student population of 1800 full time, and 600 part time undergraduate students together with 50 or so graduate and postgrade students on 1 April 1977 having absorbed most of the students, staff and courses of the Gordon Institute of Technology and the State College of Victoria at Geelong. It occupies some 200 acres at Waurn Ponds, eight kilometres south west of Geelong, previously being developed by the Gordon Institute of Technology as well as four other sites in the City. Courses offered by Deakin include a number of professional courses - engineering, architecture, accountancy, writing for the media, teaching, computing and dietetics together with more general University courses in the humanities, sciences and social sciences. The six schools into which the University is organised, offer undergraduate work leading to degrees (or in certain cases diplomas) in some of which an honours year is available. Research Master's and Ph.D's are available in fields where facilities and supervision can be provided. Some post graduate diplomas are offered and course work master's programs will become increasingly available. In the past year some twenty academic staff have taken up new appointments with Deakin and a similar number will be appointed next year.

In brief then, the University is occupied in servicing a considerable range of existing courses, substantially modifying a number of them and developing a range of new offerings both on and off campus.

In addition, there is a rapidly increasing interest in research and the development of graduate and postgraduate programs. This is being done within funding provisions which recognise in part the special needs of a developing university but without specific provision for the developing off campus studies and at an overall level below that of normal university funding.

This is the institutional backdrop against which the present paper has been written.

Mission and Commission

The Act by which Deakin University was established included specific reference to off campus studies requiring Deakin

> *'to provide tertiary education at University level for students attending the University and to provide the opportunity for tertiary education at University level to all qualified persons whether within or outside Victoria, by means of external studies programmes',*

and even more specifically requiring Deakin

> *'to arrange for the provision of study centres at Ballarat and Bendigo and other appropriate places in Victoria where students taking external studies programmes can have access to library and to other study facilities and can be given tutorial and practical assistance.'*

Deakin accepted its brief with enthusiasm and from the beginning has regarded off campus studies as the area in which it will make its major contribution to the university scene in Victoria.

Philosophy

There are several articles of faith that guided our beginnings in off campus area.

Firstly it seemed clear that opportunities for off campus studies at University level were not as readily available to Victorians as they were to residents in neighbouring states and that the provision of such opportunities represented a most worthwhile activity.

Secondly, it seemed to us, without being presumptuous, that a number of existing off campus programs had been denied the resources necessary for them to be mounted at an educationally satisfying level. In part this seemed to arise from the belief that off campus study was a cheap way of providing university courses and there is a suspicion that in some institutions the off campus operation subsidised the on campus operation. It was our belief that the cost of the off campus mode would not be less but that the money would be applied in different ways. We are committed to the notion that the off campus student should receive his fair share of resources.

Thirdly, we accepted the view that the quality of off campus teaching materials would be improved generally if staff were required to plan a course from beginning to end, write the teaching materials and to do this in association with a group of colleagues who could critically assess each other's writing and add their insightes to those of the individual writers. Thus we have committed ourselves to the course team as the primary means of generating teaching materials.

Fourthly, it was our view that admirable as was the model provided by the Open University, because of the difference in scale of operations, it would not be possible for Deakin to invest the resources necessary to write original material for all its courses. Therefore, our efforts are directed in large part to finding the best of existing materials, integrating these by various means into our courses and adding orienting, linking and ruminative material that allows the students to meet the objectives of the course. It is by this judicious mix of existing and original material that we believe we make the best use of resources.

Fifthly, it is our conviction that we should not distinguish any more than absolutely necessary between on and off campus students. We will use the same teaching materials for both on and off campus students with appropriately modified teaching strategies. We do not intend to have a separate department of external studies. In common with manyother institutions we will use the same staff for teaching both on and off campus and will allow students to shift from one mode to another and to study both on and off campus concurrently. Perhaps the emphasis is best summarised by indicating that we are trying to avoid structural differentiation whilst accommodating tne necessary functional differences.

Sixthly, it is our contention that if we do our job of course design and delivery properly, a student should be able to complete the course without necessarily attending the campus.

Finally, we have the belief that the off campus student is not a second class citizen, receiving an inferior form of education and emerging at the end as a lesser educational product. Our effort is being on making him equal in all respects.

Demand

Much has been said about demand for off campus places in tertiary education. A year ago it was an article of faith when we asserted that there is in Victoria a significant pool of potential tertiary students whose needs have not yet been met, despite the welcome extension of off campus programs through Gippsland, Warrnambool and Bendigo Colleges of Advanced Education which have joined R.M.I.T. in making such programs available. This year some 3000 tertiary students are entrolled in these institutions. As well, both the State College of Victoria (Melbourne) and the State College of Victoria (Toorak) provide courses in the off campus mode for several hundred students and La Trobe University makes available a number of first year science subjects to a limited number of external students. The enrolment of several thousand teachers at Hawthorn Teachers Centre engaged in adding to their qualifications also bears on the question of demand for off campus places.

When comparing Victoria with Queensland and New South Wales which both have well developed external programs at university level and taking account of participation ratesin tertiary education, it was estimated that Victoria could well have some six and a half thousand students interested in tertiary study in the off campus mode.

Some of these students, in addition to those enrolled in the Victorian Institutions mentioned, are enrolled in out of state universities or colleges of advanced education. It is clear that a potential clientele of this size will allow only a strictly limited number of tertiary institutions to engaged in off campus studies if these are to be provided on a scale which allows for the production of courses of high quality but with sufficiently large enrolments to give some economy of scale.

If the number of institutions offering such programs is strictly limited and those engaged in off campus studies do so on a cooperative and collaborative basis there is every reason to expect that an effective education can be provided for students wishing to study in this mode. Deakin plans to admit to its off campus program approximately a thousand students in 1978 and anticipates that it may have 2500 to 3000 off campus students by the mid nineteen eighties.

While it is not possible for us to give details about our final enrolment figures for 1978 our preliminary figures may be of interest.

In response to advertisements placed in newspapers early in June and giving details of the off campus program there were some 2000 enquiries. This group could be roughly characterised as follows:

Sex	40% men 60% women
Age	60% between 20-39
Geographic Distribution	60% Melbourne 15% Geelong 25% Victorian Country
Types of entry	20% mature age special entry 30% had HSC or equivalent though not necessarily coming direct from school. 50% had some post secondary qualification
Course preference	45% Education 30% Humanities 25% Social Sciences

Subsequently further information and application forms were sent out to those intial enquiries. Up to 15 August 1100 formal applications for enrolment had been received.

The final number of enrolments will be determined by several factors not the least of which is exposure to a counselling package providing the opportunity for self selection.

Entry

In common with other Victorian universities, Deakin will participate in the VUAC system and will admit students who have satisfied normal university requirements through the Higher School Certificate Examination of the Tertiary Orientation Year.

Admission will also be granted, however, to mature age students who demonstrate the capacity and the motivation to cope with university studies. Whilst budgetary restrictions may necessitate the imposition of quotas on student intakes, no mature student will be denied entry to Deakin solely because he lacks a formal education qualification.

In seeking to give expression to that last statement of intent, Deakin has developed an early application scheme for mature age students. Mature age entrants will be accepted for off campus study in Humanities and Social Sciences and in 1978 a minimum of one hundred places will be available for these mature students. In selecting for these places preference will be given to early applicants, to people of Aboriginal descent and to cases of disadvantaged.

Mature age students are defined as those over 21 years of age on January 1, 1978 and who have not attempted to qualify for University or College admission by sitting for the Higher School Certificate or equivalent within the period 1975-77.

Early Applicant Scheme

It is our belief that in opening the doors of the University to people who might otherwise be denied a place because of limited educational qualifications and experience it becomes our responsibility to maximise the possibility of their success. Accordingly, a counselling program is being developed which will allow intending students, especially mature age applicants to test their motivation, to understand better the demands of university study and to anticipate the role conflicts that arise between employment and study or between demands of home and family and the demands of study.

The counselling program has three aspects:

1 There is the attempt to complete the admission and enrolment procedures for all new off campus students between June and December of the year before they start their courses. This provides an acculturation and socialisation period in which the student can prepare for the new experience. Once the student has completed the enrolment procedures, preliminary reading lists will be sent prior to Christmas and the first course material will be sent in the second half of January. In this way the off campus student gets away to an early start - an important consideration in view of the shortness of the academic year.

2 A counselling package is being written which is sent to applicants in two mailings. The first mailing contains:

(a) Some introductory material which alerts students to the problems an off campus student might encounter, outlines the resources available and in particular draws attention to people who will serve as major points of contact within the university. In essence it is a bridge building exercise.

(b) Next the applicant is helped to analyse his reasons for wanting to study at Deakin. Our hypothesis is that the better a student understands what he is letting himself in for and the surer he is that hit is what he wants to do, then the more likely he is to be successful. Essentially this is an exercise in self exploration.

(c) Then there is a section on study techniques outlining some useful approaches to study. This should give him some confidence that he knows how to handle the demands of university study.

When the first part of the package has been worked through the applicant writes for the second part. This consists of sample material to indicate something of the flavour of the subjects being offered. The student is encouraged to work through this material, do the relevant reading and any self assessment exercises. Accompanying this material there is also an enrolment form. Should the applicant now wish to comlete his enrolment he fills in the enrolment form and returns it with the general service fee.

Throughout this procedure the applicant is invited to make contact by telephone or letter or in person with relevant staff members. In general the package is designed to help the student begin interacting with the course material and establishing communication with the university.

3 A weekend workshop will be run which explores in more depth some of the issues raised in the counselling package together with any other issues students may wish to explore. These workshops are voluntary and will be held in Geelong and Melbourne on fixed dates and in other country certres subject to student interest.

The counselling package is being sent to all applicants but is designed particularly for the mature age student who is entirely without any academic qualification as a basis for admission to a university program. In this and other ways Deakin hopes to provide an opportunity for self selection and preparation and that will enchance the quality of this educational experience and help to reduce the 'wastage' that otherwise would occur.

Course Offerings

In 1978 Deakin University will offer courses for off campus students in the schools of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences.

School of Education

Curriculum Design and Development, Developmental Psychology, Introduction to Educational Research, Individualised Learning.

School of Humanities

Images of Man (Philosophy and Literature), The Australia City (History, Sociology, Literature) Religious Experience (Religious Studies and philosophy).

School of Social Sciences

War and Modern Industrial Society (History, Political Science and Economics).

In subsequent years the School of Education plans to offer semester units such as:

Sociology of Education
Educational Administration
Classroom Testing
Cognitive Psychology
Curriculum Studies
Language Arts
Mathematics Education
Arts Education

These units will be of interest to teachers in all divisions wishing to upgrade their qualifications or to convert their diplomas to degrees.

Courses to be developed within the School of Social Sciences include:

Imperialism A; expansion of Europe
Imperialism B; clash of cultures
Defence Studies A; British and Imperial Defence
Defence Studies B; Super-powers and client states
Complex Political Systems
International Organisations
Industrial Economics
Tradition and Modernity

The School of Humanities plans to build on its initial first level offerings courses such as:

Modern Literature
Drama Studies
Regional History
Australian Literature
History of Ideas
Social Studies of Science
Religious Studies
Media Studies

Consideration is being given by other schools providing some offerings in the off campus mode.

In the School of Sciences a beginning will be made in 1979 or 1980 with three first level courses available for students in all schools built around physical sciences, computing and statistics, and the life sciences.

In Engineering and Architecture the off campus emphasis will be on graduate diploma and an experimental first level course in Energy.

In addition these schools are planning to introduce research degrees at Master's level and at Doctorate level for off campus students subject to the availability of satisfactory facilities and supervision.

Commerce is likely to mount its first courses in the off campus mode in Economics and Legal Studies and at the graduate diploma level.

Course Development

For each of the courses currently being prepared a course team has been established. The membership of each team averages some six or seven. Whilst there are differences between teams in the way they function it is clear that most teams develop:

- a set/s of educational objectives
- an outline of the course into sections
- a selection of the best published materials relevant to the course
- practical exercises and student activities designed to produce student interaction with the teaching material
- appropriate media/technology support
- preliminary and supplementary reading lists
- original material written by members of the course team

Progress has been good with, for example, the well advanced teams having produced a preprint version of some sections of the course for developmental testing.

These have been edited, type set, pasted up and printed in roughly the same format as is intended for the final version but without the art work and graphics.

While Deakin has modelled its course team mode of course development on the Open University there are substanial differences. Our teams are smaller. They have shorter lead time for preparation. They have fewer specialist members in the areas of educational technology, eg. course advisors, editors, designers and media specialists. The majority of team members also carry a heavy and in many cases a full teaching load as well as their course development activities. These differences are not always by design but due at times to our more limited resources. Nor are the differences transitory for it is likely that a small institution, engaged in both on and off campus teaching, will always have to make use of more economical modes of course development than institutions such as the Open University.

To illustrate what a team may finally produce, let me outline the materials to come from one such team.

Images of Man is a year long course which represents a quarter of a full time student's workload. The course is divided into four sections for each of which a study guide is being prepared together with a reader which contains most of the extracts and articles the student is required to read and five or six audio cassettes. The team is also giving thought to producing a video program which would be distributed through study centres and weekend or vacation schools. In all, therefore, eight books and some twenty to twenty-four audio cassettes are being prepared.

Consultants

Because of the limited resources, the need to broaden its range of expertise and the need to maintain maximum flexibility Deakin employs a wide range of consultants.

These have been of two types. In the first place we have had consultants whose expertise lies particularly in the field of educational technology. Some of these like Michael Macdonald-Ross have been drawn from the Open University. Others, such as Paul Northcott and Bob Ross come from Australian institutions although without considerable experience at the Open University. These people have worked closely with out course teams for periods ranging from a few days to a month functioning essentially as course advisers. In this role they have been able to raise issues that otherwise may have been ignored and to question statements and assumptions that otherwise may have gone unchallenged. Their job at times was to remind teams that life was not meant to be easy! As well, they were often able to contribute ideas and advice at the practical level that would help teams to resolve conflict and to begin advancing again after some impasse. More importantly they contributed ideas and views on the overall processes of course development and drew attention to deficiencies.

The other kind of consultant we use extensively is the subject expert who works with individual teams and contributes sometimes by writing one or more sections of a course and at other times by evaluating what has been written by the team. The use of subject experts has allowed Deakin to extend quite substantially the range of academic expertise available in course teams.

It is expected that the continued use of both kinds of consultants will be common practice in Deakin.

There is an additional input planned for 1978 when in February, Brian Lund from the Open University will spend several weeks with us, putting three groups of staff members through an intensive training program in the writing of distance teaching materials.

Original Structure

The accompanying diagram shows the organisational structure being developed at Deakin. Some of this structure has emerged because of our philosophy whilst some has been mothered by necessity. What cannot be shown in the diagram is the degree of flexibility inherent in the organisation. This is achieved in part by temporary of fixed term appointments, by the use of consultants and by not having an administrative separate school or department to handle the off campus program.

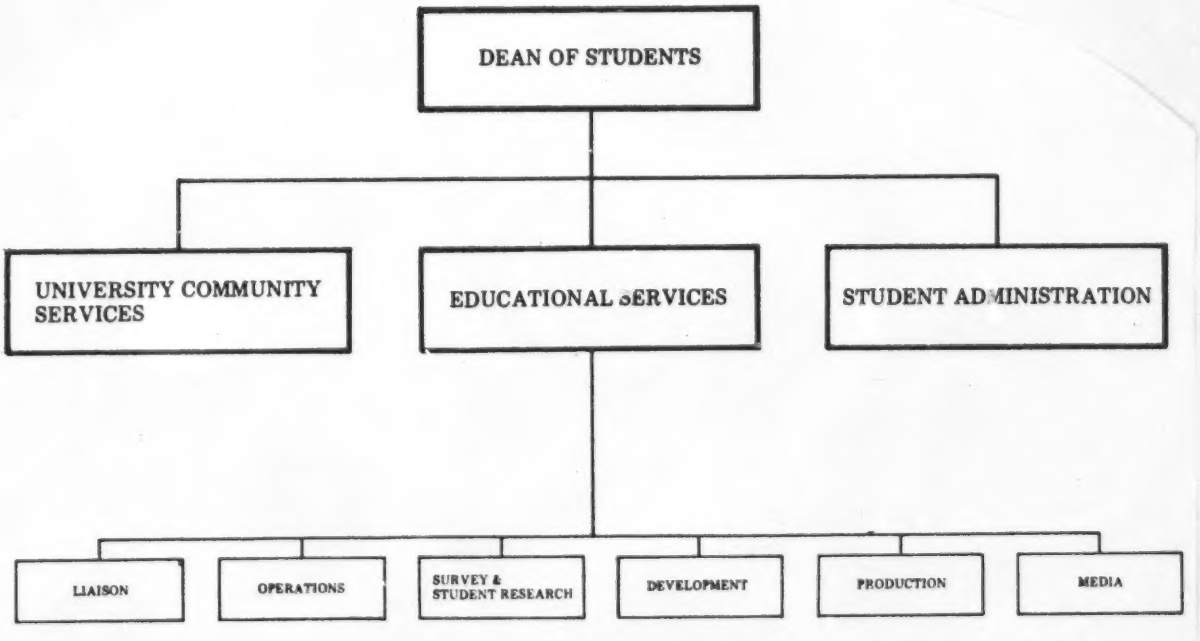
The Off Campus Studies Committee is the main policy making body in the off campus area and is a standing committee of the Academic Planning Board, Deakin's main academic body. The Committee meets monthly and its membership contains a mix of academic and administrative staff with some members drawn from other organisations and from the community. To facilitate the day to day operation a five man executive is impowered to act for the full committee between meetings.

The academic side of the operation is under the direct control of the Planning Deans in their respective Schools. Chairmen of Course Teams are appointment by the Deans whether as a result of election by the team or by direct

nomination of the Dean. Each course team is required to develop teaching materials to the stage of final draft ready for printing or in the case of audio visual materials to the stage of readiness for multiple copying.

The Dean of Instructional Systems is a post reserved for an educational technologist of considerable experience and standing. It would be expected that such an appointee would take charge of the Development and Production Unit and of the Educational Media Unit. The responsibilities of this post are thus primarily concerned with course development and production in contrast to the Dean of Students who is responsible for getting the course out to students. Currently, the educational input expected of the Dean of Instructional Systems is obtained through consultants.

The Dean of Students is responsible for the administration and organisation of all aspects of off campus studies as related to students - admissions, enrolments, examinations, records, course delivery, provision of resources, developing regional services and counselling assistance. As well, in the absence of a Dean of Instructional Systems the Dean of Students administers the production and media units and is responsible for the co-ordination of the course teams.



Regional Network

Deakin is establishing study centres in a number of country towns or cities that have a sufficient number of students to make effective use of the facilities. Study centres would be seen as providing:

- a university presence
- accommodation for occasional tutorials and lectures
- facilities for storing, using and lending equipment
- a meeting place for students
- a reference centre

Such centres however would in no way attempt to duplicate the face-to-face teaching arrangements of off campus students as this would reimpose the constraints of time and place that off campus studies is designed largely to avoid.

In order to avoid unnecessary duplication of facilities Deakin is co-operating with existing educational organisations or institutions in various country centres so that facilities and equipment may be shared.

The way in which we see study centres operating is indicatd by the following outline:

- study centres are to function as supplementary resource centres for off campus students and attendance at them is not seen as essential for students.

- they would provide an information, and to some extent an advisory service, for local residents on the availability of courses at Deakin, enrolment procedures and who to contact for further information. The ability of study centres to do this will depend on the provision of information by Deakin, the developing experience of continuing education staff and liaison between them and Deakin staff.

- facilities should be available at study centres for using audio visual material including video cassettes by both individuals and small groups. As well we would anticipate that tele-tutorial facilities would be available. Courses will vary considerably in their audio visual requirements and many students will have access to equipment in other places. We will explore the possibility of lending audio visual material to groups with such access. However, it is still likely that audio visual requirements overall will be quite limited. Again, in most courses they are seen as 'enrichment' rather than essential.

- it is expected that one or perhaps two tutorial sessions a semester might be arranged at each centre in each subject. As well as a 'content' input these are likely to provide a 'counselling' function in ascertaining how students are finding the course, what problems they are experiencing and what particular forms of additional help they might be seeking.

- in our first year of operations it is expected that staff from Deakin will be involved in some if not all of these visits. As well there will no doubt be moves to involve tutors from the local areas but the use of local tutors will be quite limited unless they are also involved in assignment marking.

- perhaps even more importantly than anything said so far is the notion that study centres might serve as a venue for self initiated student groups to meet to discuss aspects of the course and with some guidance to engaged in the occasional tele-tutorial session.

- staffing can be seen, therefore, as minimal in the study centre. Perhaps a part time co-ordinator working a few hours a week may be employed. Resident or full time staff are not envisaged while it is very likely that staff employed by the centres for continuing education may well perform whatever functions are necessary for Deakin. If this is the case some appropriate financial arrangement will be made with the centre.

- library facilities are a vexed question and we anticipate that rather than expect centres to maintain a mini library some arrangements will be made with existing libraries in the town or city. Some investigation of the various possibilities is already underway.

Current Arrangements

- *Melbourne Study Centre*

  It is expected that negotiations will be completed shortly to provide study centre facilities adjacent to the Council for Adult Education in the Mutual Stores Building, 256 Flinders Street, Melbourne.

  This study centre will be staffed so that off campus students in the Melbourne area will be able to use it on an afternoon and evening basis and for a limited period during the weekend. There will be close co-operation with the Council of Adult Education particularly with respect to library and audio visual facilities.

- *Regional Colleges of Advanced Education*

  Negotiations are being conducted with Ballarat, Bendigo, Gippsland and Warrnambool CAE's to provide study centre facilities for Deakin. If these negotiations are successful, it will mean that the regional colleges may provide teaching and administration as well as accommodation and facilities for Deakin students.

- *Centres for Continuing Education*

  At Mildura, Horsham, Shepparton and Wangaratta agreement has been reached on providing study centre facilities as originally organised. Agreement at Albury Wodonga has not yet been reached and negotiations in that centre include discussions with the Riverina College which has a study centre in Albury. These centres will be used as a pilot group and decisions about the way in which study centres operate and the extension of such facilities to other cities will be made in the light of our experience with this pilot group of centres.

- *Study Groups*

  In addition, it is expected that in a number of areas students will take the initiative by forming themselves into a study group and gaining access to educational resources available in their town. Deakin would them be able to service such 'self help' groups by sending materials and arranging the occasional tutorial visit in similar fashion to the study centres.

Of necessity, our regional network must be a low cost operation and must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate changing geographic patterns of study enrolment.

Co-Operation and Collaboration

It is clear that if a wide range of high quality courses in the off campus mode is to be made available to tertiary students, then co-operation and collaboration between institutions is essential. Three avenues for such joint action have been identified.

Firstly, co-operation through rationalisation. Deakin's initial offerings in education, humanities and social sciences will compete to some extent with the offerings of other institutions, in these areas. This is inevitable as Deakin, like these institutions, had to start its off campus program in subject areas most suitable for distance teaching in which it had appropriate resources and for which there is the greatest demand.

Generally it has been suggested that rationalisation should be achieved by:

- restricting the areas from which an institution can accept students, or

- restricting the courses that can be offered by an institution.

It does not seem reasonable to suggest that distance teaching, which by its very nature attempts to free the student from the restrictions of location, should reintroduce such a restriction in the interests of rationisation. Nor does it seem just to deprive a student of a preferred education experience because of the accident of residential address.

On the other hand, it is not a simple matter to decide how course offerings should be restricted in any given institution.

Perhaps in broad terms rationalisation as initially applied to Macquarie and New England ie. science versus non science, is tenable especially if it is done ab initio. It is possible to envisage such rationalisation in respect to highly specialised courses such as a number of those offered by R.M.I.T. in the off campus mode and in which it has the acknowledged expertise. The same restriction can be applied to professional programs for which there is only limited demand either by students or employers. It is more difficult to apply it to professional programs, eg. in-service education, when the student demand is considerable and not being satisfied by existing programs. It is even more difficult to sustain with the more general liberal arts or social science programs except in a limited or partial way. However, limited or partial rationisation may be sufficient and if there can be some agreement between institutions wasteful duplication could be minimised.

The other point of view however, which suggests that healthy competition in a free trade situation is the most effective way of avoiding wasteful duplication, should not be ignored.

Deakin would certainly join with other Victorian institutions in considering ways in which to optimise the use of resources.

A second form of co-operation lies in a suggestion put forward by the Vice Chancellor, Dr. F.R. Jevons, on the extended course team mode. Briefly, the suggestion envisages that when a new course (subject) is to be developed that two or more institutions wishing to mount such a subject might co-operate in its development by each contributing some staff expertise in whatever way they individually chose. In this way the range of subject expertise available to each institution could be extended.

For those interested, the proposal is developed more fully in the Vice Chancellor's paper.

A third form of co-operation lies in permitting students to enrol concurrently in more than one institution. For example, if a Deakin off campus student resides in Bendigo why should he not be allowed to include in his Deakin arts degree a subject or subject stream offered by Bendigo? Likewise why should not a Bendigo student be allowed to include in his Bendigo degree subject or subject stream offered by the Deakin off campus program? In this way both Bendigo and Deakin would be able to make available to their respective students a wider range of subjects than would be available without such co-operation. There need be no transfer of funds but a simple reciprocal arrangement whereby each admits the other's students to certain courses.

However we do it, those involved in off campus studies must find ways to co-operate and collaborate.

Postcript

It was my intention to complete this paper with a section entitled 'Now you've had the theory let me tell you how it really works'. But time ran out and deadlines defeated the intention. I intend to redress that situation at least in part, by speaking only to one or two sections of the paper as written and using the rest of my time in highlighting the problem areas and telling you what we have learned. Should you be interested I would be happy to send you the postscript when it has been committed to paper.